

Notes from Farmers' Market Managers' Workshop

February 12, 2008

Market Managers' Exchange

General Ideas to increase business/popularity of Market:

- Allow Garden vendors (?)
 - Quincy market provides a community table to gardeners (no fee)
 - Board of Health issues may be a concern if gardeners are allowed to sell produce – i.e. lead in soils
 - Families of gardeners might attend which increases business of market
- Provide education on why farmers' markets are a positive aspect to provide local, fresh food that is good for the local economy. Ways to educate:
 - Eat in/Act out – program organized by Food Project involving local youth – contact The Food Project for more information (www.thefoodproject.org)
 - Work with Slow Food to promote market: www.slowfoodusa.org
 - Set up a general info tent at market
 - Work with other groups that promote local foods and agriculture

Ideas to Promote market:

- PR –radio, weekly newspapers
- Letters to editor
 - Involve farmers at your market in writing press releases or letters to the editor
- E- newsletter
- Grow different or unique crops and educate consumers
- Target neighbors within community where market is located– not just employees of local businesses
 - Need to consider when neighbors are home when planning market hrs in order to serve them.
 - Consider traffic patterns
 - Survey community for preferences/needs
- For urban markets- you should consider public transportation and sidewalks in choosing market logistics
- Market should be visible and a destination in itself to attract business
- Consider different and unique events/publicity
 - Events' Calendar – Boston Globe
 - Weekly listings in newspaper
 - Business editor may be a different angle to pursue
 - Create a new spin to increase publicity/story coverage
 - Music series – Plymouth holds different music and the local paper lists it each week. (Plymouth does not have specific insurance to cover music events). Type of music chosen should depend on specifics of your market and consumers preferences. Greenfield solicits musicians to play for free

at market but allows them to sell their CDs and markets them in the paper, puts promotional signs in area stores, and uses networking and phone calls to increase publicity. Lexington market has only acoustic music b/c they do not have access to electricity and recommends kid-friendly music b/c it has been most successful for them. Lexington also has a volunteer to specifically source performers. Lexington pays their music performers. Marblehead also pays their performers (\$100/day). Playing recorded music was suggested as an alternative to live performances.

- Kids activities were suggested and noted to be successful in drawing in families
- Tasting or demos: Springfield market has cooking demonstrations and tasting at the market (the market manager prepares ahead of time but brings all of needed supplies: water, towels, etc...and is able to keep things cold/hot throughout the day/tasting time.) She also provides the recipes of the sampled food and keeps them simple and uses in-season ingredients. (it was noted that it is predicted by 2015 only 15% of population will know how to cook).
 - Check with relevant Board of Health for applicable regulations
 - Newton market holds “tasting contests” between choc. Chip cookies and fig Newton cookies to increase participation
 - Mason Sq. market works with local school to do some prep for tasting/sampling.
- Pumpkin carving station/contest
- Canning demo
- At one market, the local paper runs a, ‘What’s new at the market’ article each week. In return the manager raffles off a basket of donated produce to customers and advertises it as sponsored by the newspaper.
- Low-income Markets
 - Targeting to WIC and/or local service agencies was noted to be important.
 - Community dinner to fund coupons in Greenfield Market